



## Meeting Minutes

**SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION  
LAKE OKEECHOBEE COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, April 26, 2006, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
LaBelle Civic Auditorium  
481 West Hicpochee Road (State Road 84)  
La Belle, Florida**

**Note: Following the Lake Okeechobee Committee Meeting there will be a Rule Development Workshop on a proposed SFWMD Water Shortage Plan for Supply Side Management (Chapters 40E-21 and -22, Florida Administrative Code) from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. at the same location. Committee members and stakeholders are invited to participate in the workshop.**

### Attending WRAC/Lake Okeechobee Members

Malcolm "Bubba" Wade

Richard Earp

Ken Todd

Michael DiTerlizzi

Mary Ann Martin

Don Fox

Jeff Schmidt

Judy Sanchez

Ray Scott

Paul Gary

Roland Ottolini

Bob Pace

Joe Collins

1. Welcome and Introductions – Malcolm "Bubba" Wade, Chair  
Mr. Wade welcomed everyone
2. Member Issues – Malcolm "Bubba" Wade, Chair  
Paul Gray – At the last meeting, we discussed phosphorus levels and a proposed BMP rule revision by FDACS. Ray Scott can provide an update on the draft rule

Ray Scott – A proposed rule was published last Friday. A 21-day public comment period began on April 21; hearing will take place if requested, on May 15. The proposed rule extends to the complete watershed not just priority basins. It incorporates the recently completed row crop BMP manual, which is a statewide manual and is the Lake Okeechobee rule. It tightens up record keeping requirements, specifies a nutrient management component, and requires one of is that when notice of intent to participate in the BMP plan is submitted, the nutrient plan has to be implemented. Additional soil and plant tissue test and how it relates to fertilizer application rates, and that are some of the main issues incorporated into the rule now. The FAW notice can be found in the 4-21 publication. Rick has a copy of the rule.

Rick Smith – We had a copy of the draft and were asked not to send it out at that time, we'll send it out to the committee.

Bubba – In essence, the rule, now includes all the basins not just the priority basins and the EAA row crop BMP rule. Invite DACS to the next meeting to give an overview and how this rule impacts the lake.

Paul Gray – Concerned that we would be adopting a rule that allows pollution as some of the crops require high phosphorus fertilizations. If there are only 21 days before the rule is adopted, it is too late for this committee to have input.

Ray Scott – We are addressing this on two fronts: with LOER we're actively working with IFAS and the fertilizer industry to look at the recommended rates and to revise as necessary. The rule is structured so as the rates are revised the rule is revised. The second approach is to finely tune fertilizer application rates to the crop, and use that data as appropriate.

Bubba - This rule is a necessity to start applying in the non-priority basins what they were doing in the priority basin. It gives them the regulatory authority to move forward with this program. I don't see this rule as closing the book. I've been a proponent of having the DACS and the District to globally, in all of South Florida, have consistency globally we should where should we be with the BMP.

Ray – Statutorily any of our BMPs that are not accomplishing water quality, by law, we need to revise it to address the water quality issues. This is an ongoing process.

Beverly Grady – There needs to be better communication. At the last meeting, there was no draft of the rule. Now, we are seeing that the hearings have been held and the rule has been written, we should have looked at it instead of just hearing a summary.

Ray Scott – We have informed this group, on any number of occasions.

Bubba Wade – At the next meeting we need to get Susan and Ray together on how are we going to do this phosphorous control program. If it's not adequate enough, this is the group that makes recommendations to the board to do something better.

Bubba Wade - When we schedule the next meeting we need to go over BMP rule, additions modifications, and how it fits into the regulatory program.

Mary Ann Martin – Lake Okeechobee is at 13.74' and the lower water level is helping with the water clarity, 8" to 12" all over the lake. We are seeing some growth and vegetation is coming back. In the South end, turbidity is still intense and there is wide algae bloom. Good news: some contract sprayers were more selective, but some have been spraying during small craft warning days. We need to improve the lake health by lowering the water level.

### 3. Lake Okeechobee Status Update

Water Conditions and Operations Update – Cal Neidrauer, SFWMD  
Questions and Answers

Questions: Are we meeting optimal rate of loading of nutrients to the STA?

Answer: Part of the STA design is to keep them wet, try to keep them at 6'. This year we are trying to balance quality vs quantity, so they are not to the full 6'. Conservation area 2A is not treated by the STA and is below is "floor elevation", the water deliveries are confined to stay within the canal banks, same as with the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

Lake Ecosystem and Water Quality – Susan Gray, Deputy Dir., SFWMD

Questions and Answers

Questions: How successful is cattail burning? How are we doing mapping of sediment and how are we planning on treating torpedo grass?

Answers: We have never had any success with burns when the lake been above 12.5' but it has been used as a management tool for torpedo grass. Mapping of sediment will give us better information about bottom contour, depth, sediment composition and chemistry. We are looking at alternatives. Chemical treatment will be the most controversial and is the least developed alternative. Dredging projects have been successful.

#### Public Comment

Robert Loflin - We have taken the brunt of releases down the Caloosahatchee in excess of what is safe for the estuary in the joint effort to get the lake to a lower level and a better condition. When we were taking maximum releases, we were told no releases were going south because the WCAs are full. Now they're a below floor level and there is room to move water south. We urge the District and the COE, put more flow to the south.

Cal Neidrauer – In the past, some WCAs have been too high, now from the ecological side we don't want a reversal, regulation schedule for Lake Okeechobee was designed to match with meeting the needs of the conservation areas. Regulation schedule is saying do not send water south, so doing something different will require everyone to agree. Only STA3/4 was designed to treat Lake Okeechobee water and that STA doesn't have the capacity to treat any more water. It has reached its load limit.

Andrew Gellar – In WCA 2, the marsh is at the bottom of its regulation schedule, and is been used for water supply.

Barbara Cooley – Reinforced Mr. Loflin's comments. There should be shared adversity, water needs to move south and provide relief for the Caloosahatchee.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery Update – Bob Verrastro, SFWMD

Lunch: 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

- Public Comment, Questions and Answers

Questions: If the ASR site at the C43 Reservoir is not appropriate because of the soils, have you looked at other sites? Is zoning what is holding up the Hillsboro site? Did you rank the Kissimmee chain of lakes? If ASR doesn't work, the alternative is deep well injection. How about a parallel track?

Answers: As part of the first round of exploratory wells, a suitable formation in Moorehaven was found and we are looking at Moorehaven. The Hillsboro site we are waiting for a zoning change of land using from Palm Beach County, it has been disappointingly slow, zoning changes were done at the last minute. I would guess will be building that facility late 2006. Rick Smith was asked to include this in the minutes as to raise a flag regarding zoning for future ASR in other counties.

It was asked that the Moorehaven site be picked and to proceed forward.

Our coverage ends at the Kissimmee Lakes and we couldn't perform the total evaluation, we will go back and check.

The parallel track between ASR and Deep Well will take place as part of the LOER.

Bubba Wade – Where are ASR and Deep Injection Well going? Regarding ASR we've heard about zoning with PBC and funding with Moorehaven, but when it comes to deep well, we are going to do a feasibility study next year. What is the likelihood that the feasibility study is going to say we can do something quicker than 2010?

Bob Verrastro - Deep injection wells can be utilized and they are a viable answer. The feasibility study is going to be completed in mid 2007, it is going to say wells can be permitted and constructed, they will be bigger and more expensive to construct, and also where they can be constructed.

Bubba Wade – What is the cost benefit of doing deep injection well early and ASR if it comes along later?

Bob Verrastro - The cost will be about the same, but ASR will store more water, which can then be used for future water supply.

Bubba Wade – The two things I want to pass on to you. If there are barriers we need to address, we need to know immediately. I am interested in stepping up the process. We need to know the instant anything happens. The frustrating part is that ASR is very bureaucratic and many agencies get involved. We want to know when can get the first deep well and ASR? With funding issues, we need to figure out what we need to do.

#### Public Comment

Robert Loflin – The deep well seems to have a lot of potential; I would like to see if deep wells could be fast tracked. Let's find the ability to move forward and let's find it fast.

Byron Maharrey – I stand here with mixed emotion for my friends from Sanibel but we've had our share of adversity. (Mr. Maharrey continued with questions regarding deep well injection, type of pipes, testing, etc.) My concern is that we will bring up water with higher salinities than what you are putting down.

Answer: Back pumping would stop when salinities are at drinking water standards.

Matt Bokor – We are the source of the flyer that was passed around. Please, consider the value of the estuaries, the value of the fishing, tourism and recreational activities, real estate concerns as so forth we you look at the damage that accrues from these releases. When ASR capacity won't be there, deep well could accommodate the excess.

#### 4. Committee Discussion:

Bubba Wade - Suggested that for the next meeting, the committee discussion be scheduled first on the agenda.

The committee went thru goals and objectives, and made changes to the original "options" document.

Paul Gray asked about the status of the Lake Okeechobee Technical Sub-Committee.

Rick Smith – We are behind on that; the next meeting is May 19. The initial charge of the Sub-Committee was to write a history where the lake was in terms of hydrology and water quality and where it is now in terms of hydrology and water quality.

Bubba Wade – When we first formed the committee, we question whose going to chair the committee. If no one objects Cal Neidrauer and Tom MacVicar will chair and co chair and start driving this home a little quicker.

Adjourn: 3:30 p.m.

**3:30 – 5:00 p.m.: Public Workshop, SFWMD Water Shortage Plan for Supply Side Management. Same Location.**